1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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ments and fine clothes, or a splendid herd of cattle—all these are forms of *ukumoga*.

Traditionally Nyakyusa women wore only a bark-cloth belt tied around the waist and drawn between the legs to fall in streamers in front (cf. Plate XIII), and the pagan women cling to this dress, maintaining that it is only 'Swahili women with dirty diseases' who have to wear clothes to cover their sores, and if a pagan woman has a cloth she will probably wave it like a flag or hang it over one shoulder, when she dances. Except for the Christians, few Nyakyusa women regularly wear clothes. The Christians like a brightly coloured cloth tied under the armpits, and hanging to the knees (cf. Plate IX). Women make their own bark-cloths with great care, and decorate them with geometrical patterns in red and black, the red dye being imported from the Livingstone mountains; they mix this same dye with a fatty ointment made from the seeds of the *unsyunguti* tree, and rub it all over themselves. The most prized ornament (worn by both sexes) are body rings of coiled brass or copper wire (cf. Plate XIII). In the past men went naked except for these body rings[1] but, unlike the women, they have taken enthusiastically to clothes, and swagger around in brilliant loin-cloths or flowing white togas; or, if rather more sophisticated, in freshly pressed shorts and shirts, or lounge suits and topees.

The series of ceremonies at a girl's initiation and marriage, and at a funeral, are regular occasions for dancing, and the birth and death rates are so high that these occur very frequently within a chiefdom of 3,000 men. Once in a generation the eagerly anticipated 'coming out' ceremony offers an even greater opportunity for display. Skill in dancing is admired and the young people are encouraged to practise. A bride's mother does a great deal of the heavy work for her daughter, saying '*amoge tasi*', which means literally 'let her display herself first', and implies 'let her have a good time while she can'; and a father may use the same phrase of his son. Angombwike explained: 'The old men used to take great pride in their sons; often a man would say to his son: "Don't you hoe for me, I'll do the hoeing myself, you go and swagger about." Sometimes a man would sell a cow and buy a huge-bladed spear and give it to his son. Then, if he heard that his son

[1] cf. Elton, op. cit., p. 322; H. H. Johnston, *British Central Africa*, p. 28.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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maids and always carries a mat or cloth to screen her face from her father and his contemporaries, her father's full sisters, her older brothers,[1] and her 'mothers-in-law' (*abakamwana*).[2] These she must fear and respect (*ukutila*) and so avoid. Her father-in-law and his brothers she avoids altogether from the time of her engagement, or at least after she has reached the age of 8 or 9. Her companions do not *ukutila* with her, though those of them who are already betrothed will, of course, avoid their own fathers-in-law.

During the period of seclusion the girls have two specific tasks: to weave the fine mats used as beds, and to fetch firewood. Every bride should take to her husband's home at least one fine mat (*ubunyasa*) which she has made herself, as well as several coarse ones (*imitefu*),[3] and weaving a fine mat is a lengthy task, occupying a skilful woman a month. Each girl weaves for herself, but the firewood that each must fetch is stacked in the bride's mother's loft. The bride also occupies herself hammering out bark-cloth, pleating it for the strip worn between the legs, and decorating bark-cloth belts (*vide* plate 5), so that she may have the fresh ones required during the ritual, and a supply to take with her to her husband's; but this work is not emphasized as an obligation: rather it is a recreation. Women take great pride in the decoration of their belts—we watched several brides making them and handing them round for the admiration of their fellows. The maids may work in the fields if required to do so, but the bride herself does not, and 'she gets fat because she does not have much work to do'. The whole ritual normally lasts about three months, but if, for some reason such as a pressing need to go out to work, the husband is in a hurry for its completion, various acts may be telescoped. The time-table depends primarily on when the marriage-cattle and food for the various feasts are ready.

From the time of first menstruation until she does it ritually, a bride should neither wash nor oil herself. The prohibition is felt to be a very onerous one and some girls now break it, but women said 'in the old days we did not wash'. 'Girls nowadays are more cunning. We were afraid.'

[1] Some informants denied that she avoided father's sisters or brothers. Others insisted that she must avoid them because 'brothers are fathers, and father's full sisters are father'.

[2] i.e. her husband's own mother and other women he calls mother. In this account the plural 'mothers' indicates own and classificatory mothers.

[3] Nyakyusa beds are made of layers of mats laid on rollers between two logs at head and foot. One chief's bed we noted was made up of sixty-eight mats.

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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286 and the river banks. Large nets, with wide or fine mesh, are made with floats and sinkers attached, pulled at both ends by means of ropes. *Ilitimbilo* is [226] a net used only at night, when the water is beaten with flat sticks to drive the fish into it. There are also small hand nets, and special nets made for catching special kinds of fish.

Weaving is a very ancient craft, and may have begun with the weaving of mats, which are at present made from banana fibre, grass, reeds, palm leaf, and the tough outer skin of palms. These mats are used for sleeping on, laying out grain to dry in the sun, straining pounded maize, and a dozen other uses. [438] Long grass or palm leaf mats are used by Europeans as carpets; and there is a good trade in palm leaf bags for carrying rice, and great mats for packing cotton for the European market.

Very good cloth is still woven in the Igale district by the Safwa. The art was formerly universal among the Konde, but has now died out before inferior trade goods. At Igale the cloth is either plain white, or mixed black and white, though dyes for other colours are known. These cloths make excellent bath towels, and a trade could be developed if encouragement were given. Bark-cloth is very extensively made, 287 and there has been a recent revival of this industry consequent on the exorbitant price of European goods since the war. Women wear the long *ilyabi* or loin cloth of bark, and nothing else; but, especially in the Igale district, complete suits are now made for men, wonderfully cut and sewn shorts and jackets, and

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
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287 sometimes long coats. They look well for a few weeks and then take on a dirty depressing appearance, and it is safe to say that with the reduction in price of Home goods bark-cloth will go out of favour.

281 [854] Leather work has not developed to any great extent. Women use undressed skins for carrying babies; and men, in remote districts, use them as aprons. In Poloto skins are sewn together to form garments, and in the Kinga Mountains the skins worn by the women are pleasingly decorated with shells, while the leg skins are skilfully cut into strips and used as ties, by which to bind the skin on the back. They are seldom worn in front, and the Kinga women go in furs as to their backs, while a small bunch of grass alone clothes the front. Shields, wide and narrow; blacksmith's bellows of undressed goat skin; tobacco and snuff pouches, waist belts, caps, sandals; and long strips of hide for binding purposes, such as the haft of a spear, are all or nearly all the uses that are made of leather, if indeed the term leather should be used at all, as most of the articles named are made from unprepared skins.

301 [291] Beads are strung into pleasing patterns by using various colours, and are worn in strings or broad bands, on neck, forehead, arms, ankles, shoulders. Children often go clad only in a tiny apron of beadwork, and girls in the Kinga Mountains wear similar aprons until marriage.

532 One European house in my neighbourhood is decorated with a frieze of crude representations of men on foot or on horseback, motor-cars, cycles, birds,

14: Lehmann E-5 (1939) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
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usa. It is true that one still meets blacksmiths on the outskirts of the villages or some distance away from them (as in the case of the Ndali tribe, western to the Nyakyusa area), but they no longer smelt the iron from ore mined by themselves as in former times. The smith of to-day remelt only scrap iron from disused motor-cars and other machines into tools, hatches, and spear-heads, unless, of course, the natives prefer to buy imported iron-ware. As with the Chaga, also the Nyakyusa smith can only be persuaded to submit to being photographed after long negotiation and a change into better clothes. The blacksmiths I met in the Bundali Mountains, however, made no objections whatever to being photographed at their work. Also women were allowed to attend. But one feature of the ancient Nyakyusa blacksmith's culture has been preserved till the present day: the lower part of the bellows through which the air blast is driven into the fire is still made of wood. This feature has been defined by H. Baumann as an element of the "ancient nigritic culture".

12. Dress. The cloths of the Nyakyusa have changed to a very considerable degree since the beginning of European influence. A comparison of the earliest pictures and descriptions of inhabitants at the northern end of Lake Nyasa with the dress of modern times brings out this point most forcibly. Originally the Nyakyusa went almost naked, adorned only with rings and belts, but nowadays all degrees of compromise with European fashions of dress are to be found, especially near the European settlements and Mission Stations. The most conservative element are, in this case, the women. It is still possible to-day to observe in each village the preparation of the long strips of bark *(elyabi*, pl. *amabi)* commonly worn by the women. The so-called *impandapanda* (Fotheringham: *mlambe)* tree furnishes the dress material. After the bark has been immersed in water, the bast is beaten with wooden instruments and then pulled off from the harder parts of the bark. These tools are like hammers; the flat end of such an implement is furrowed, sometimes with a disk made of horn, and as it produces patters on the bast it is called "*obosimbe*", that which produces patters. These long belts, almost reaching the ground, especially in front, are mostly ruby coloured, but the women sitting in front of their huts manufacture also other types with geometrical (triangular) patterns in yellow and brown forming only girdles *(umpango)*. In addition to this minimum requirement in the way of dress some women around the waist also wear copper belts *(manyeta)*, made of thin copper-wire, spiraly wound on a core of hairs from the tails of cows. These